

Listing of Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the subject application:

1. (previously presented) A method for managing shipping charges for transportation of items by a shipping entity from one or more actual locations of a supplier to customer locations, comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

providing first shipping charges related to actual charges by the shipping entity to the supplier for transportation of items by the shipping entity from the one or more actual supplier locations to the customer locations;

providing second shipping charges related to shipping charges for the items calculated by reference to charges applicable to shipment of the items to the customers from one or more virtual supplier locations that are different from the one or more actual supplier locations;

computing differences between the first shipping charges and the second shipping charges; and

utilizing the computed differences in managing shipping charges.

2. (original) A method as in claim 1 in which the one or more actual supplier locations are in a first country and the customer locations are in a second country.

3. (original) A method as in claim 2 in which said items are shipped from the first country to the second country in consolidated international shipments containing packages for groups of said customers, and the consolidated international shipments are divided in the second

country into individual shipments to the respective customers.

4. (original) A method as in claim 3 in which the step of providing the second shipping charges comprises utilizing a first table including relationships between weights of items and charges for shipping the respective items.

5. (original) A method as in claim 4 in which the step of providing said second charges further comprises utilizing a second table including relationships between shipping charges and zones for said customer locations.

6. (previously presented) A method for shipping items from a first country to a customers in a second country and managing shipping charge information, comprising the steps of:

fulfilling orders in the first country for items for a number of said customers, packaging the items in the first country into individual packages addressed to respective individual customers, and consolidating the individual packages into a collective international shipment;

shipping the collective international shipment as a single package to the second country, using a first shipping entity;

dividing the collective international shipment in the second country into said individual packages and shipping the individual packages to the respective customers from a location in the second country, using a second shipping entity;

providing a first shipping charge related to an actual charge by at least one of the shipping entities;

computing a second shipping charge related to applicable charges for shipment of the individual packages from a virtual location in the second country to said customers;

computing a difference between the first shipping charge and the second shipping charge;
and

utilizing said difference to manage shipping charge information.

7. (original) A method as in claim 6 in which said first and second shipping entities are the same entity.

8. (original) A method as in claim 6 in which the providing step comprises providing a first shipping charge that includes an actual charge for shipping the individual packages in the second country.

9. (original) A method as in claim 8 in which the providing step further includes providing a first shipping charge that includes an actual charge for shipping the collective international shipment from the first country to the second country.

10. (original) A method as in claim 6 in which said computing a second shipping charge comprises using a table relating shipping charges applicable to shipping from a virtual location to zones of customer locations.

11. (original) A method as in claim 6 in which said computing a second shipping charge comprises using information regarding weight of the individual packages.

12. (original) A method as in claim 6 in which said computing a second shipping charge comprises using information regarding both weight of the individual packages and zones of customer locations.

13. (original) A method as in claim 6 including carrying out the set of steps of fulfilling through computing a second shipping charge for orders related to a first time period, and repeating said set of steps for orders related to successive time periods, and said steps of computing a difference and utilizing the difference comprise computing differences related to a number of said time period and utilizing at least some of said differences.

14. (original) A system for tracking variances between freight charges that a shipping entity charges a supplier for shipping, from a first country to a second country, consolidated international shipments each containing items ordered by a number of customers located in the second country and for dividing the consolidated shipment into individual shipments to respective customers and delivering same to the customers in the second country, and freight charges the supplier bills to the customers for the delivered individual shipments, comprising:

a computer system programmed to receive orders by customers in the second country for items from the supplier, each of said orders identifying at least the customer, the item or items ordered, and an address for the customer in the second country;

a database arrangement storing information regarding the freight charges that the shipping entity charges the supplier for shipping the consolidated international shipments and for dividing the consolidated shipments and delivering the individual shipments to the customers, and further

storing information regarding local shipping charges applicable to shipping from a virtual location in the second country to respective locations in the second country;

said computer system receiving information related to the orders and shipments and utilizing the information received thereby and information from said database, and being programmed to calculate on the basis thereof shipping charges for billing to the customers in amounts that depend on the items in the individual packages and the locations of the customers in the second country; and

said computer system further being programmed to calculate differences between charges from the shipping entity to the supplier for a subset of said items and charges billed to the customers for said subset, and present results making use of said differences.

15. (previously presented) A system as in claim 14 in which said results comprise results presenting said differences organized at least by time periods longer than a day.

16. (previously presented) A system as in claim 14 in which said information regarding local shipping charges comprises information identifying local shipping charges a commercial carrier makes for shipping from a selected location in the second country to customer locations in the second country based on weight of shipments and on zones of the customers' locations.

17. (new) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

setting said second shipping charges to the customers for shipment of the items to the customers, without reference to said first shipping charges by the shipping entity for transportation of said items.